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Begum

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(54) **TRAVEL MASK**

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(*) **Notice:** Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 10/273,031, filed on Oct. 17, 2002, now Pat. No. 6,758,215.

(51) **Int. Cl.⁷** **A62B 7/10**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **128/206.19; 128/205.27; 128/206.23**

(58) **Field of Search** 128/201.14, 201.15, 128/201.12, 201.24, 205.25, 205.27, 206.19, 206.23; 2/6.5, 15, 4.31

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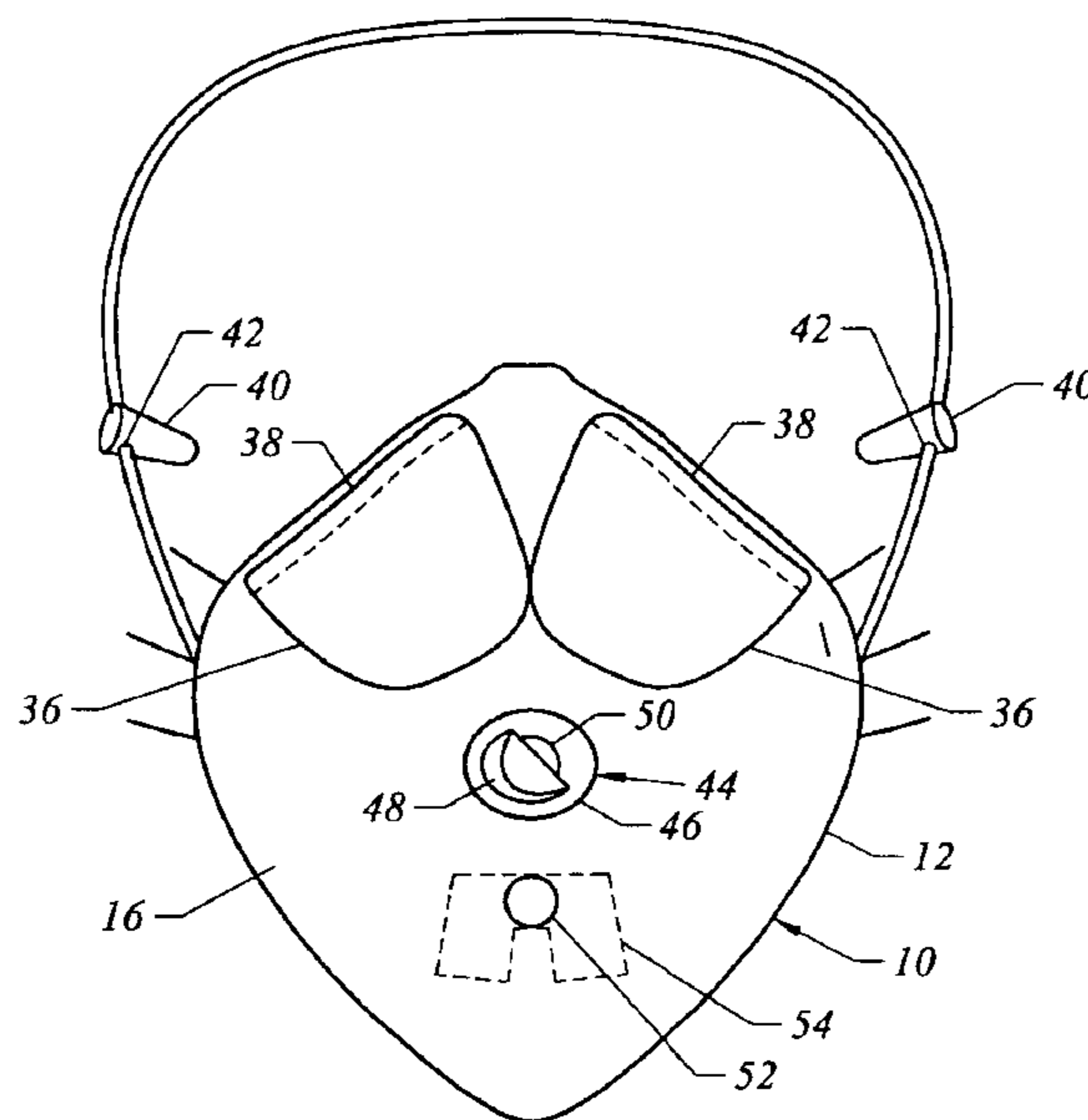
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A travel mask that fits over the nose and mouth area of a wearer's face for filtration of air, particularly recycled air in the travel compartment of a common carrier, the travel mask having a face shield that preferably includes an aroma patch that emits a pleasant aroma and a retainer such as a head band for retaining the face shield against a user's head. The retainer has slidable ear plugs for blocking noise. The travel mask also has a foldable eye flap or flaps for blocking light when the flap or flaps are extended, the flap or flaps preferably having thermal gel packs for cooling or warming the eye lid area of the wearer during use.

31 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



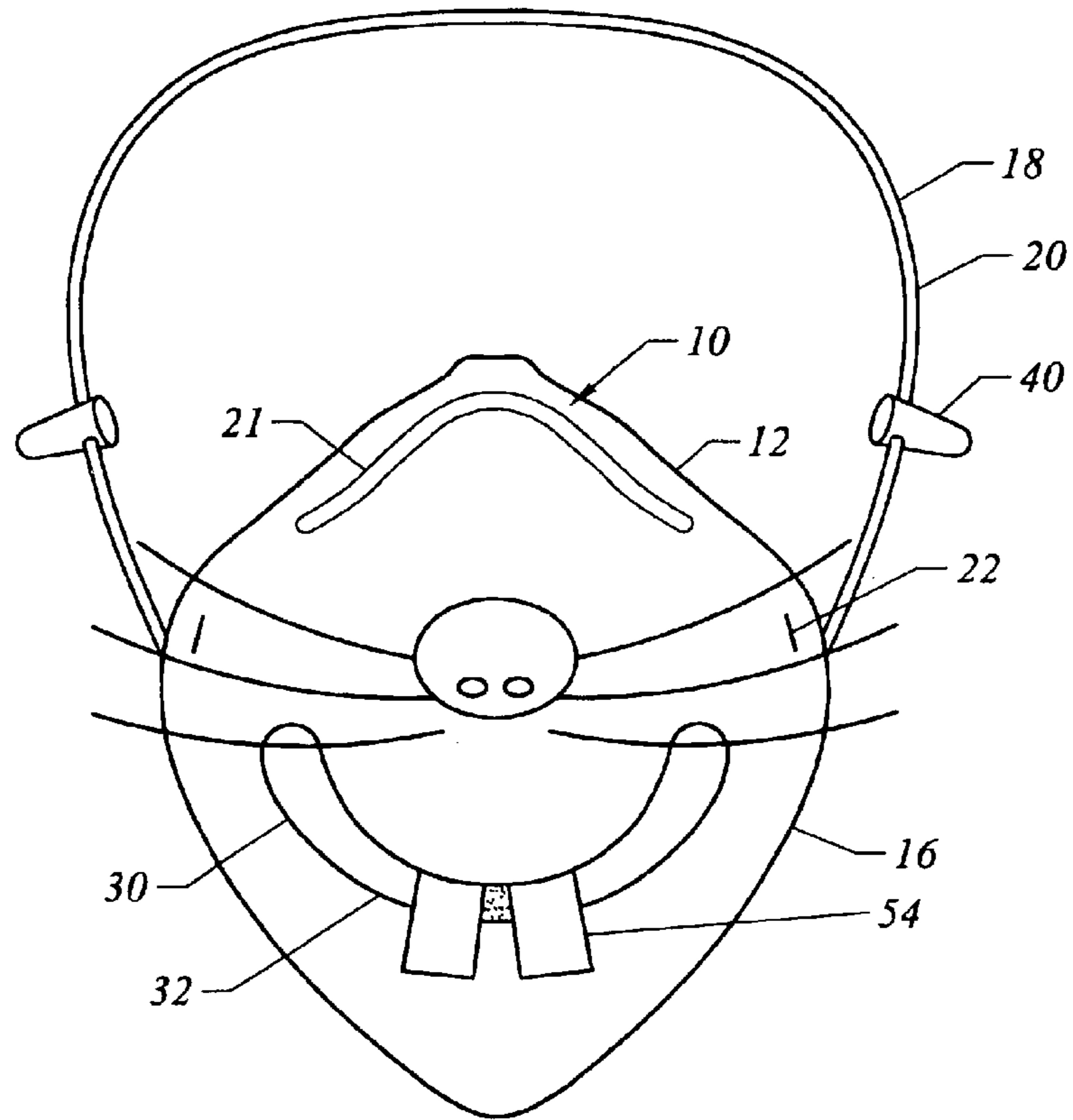


FIG. 1

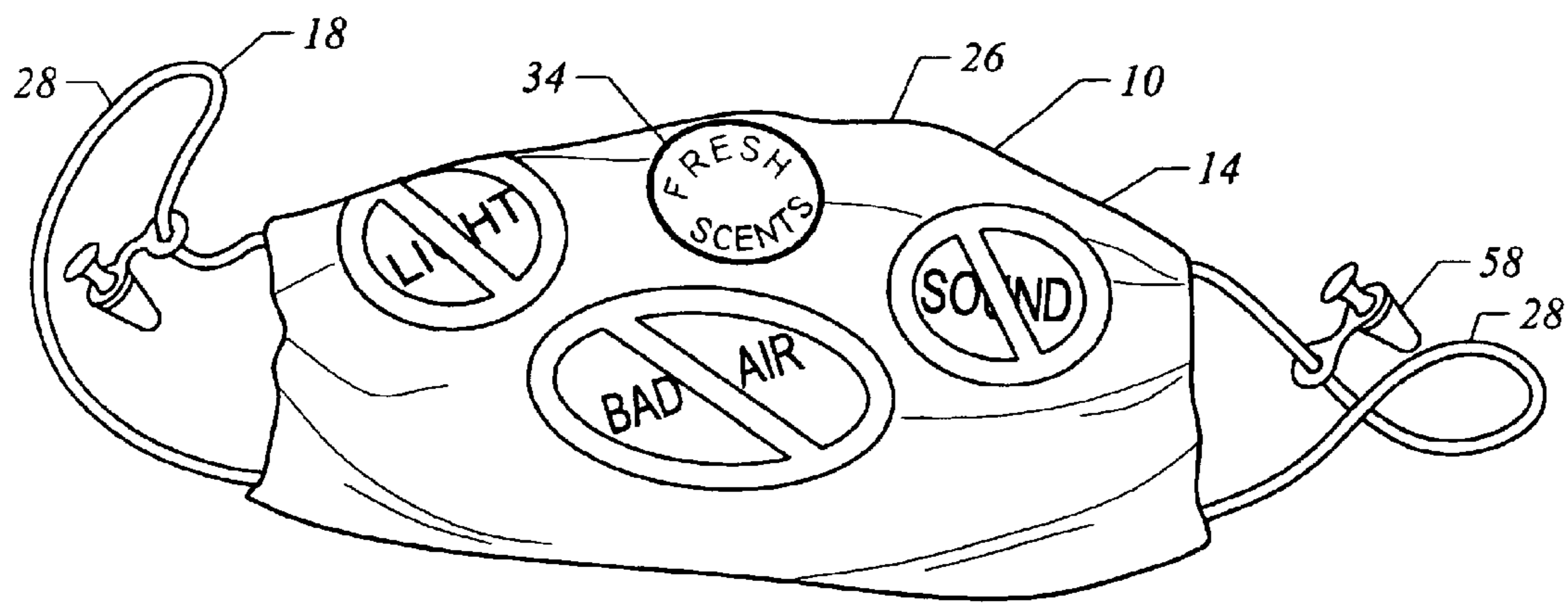


FIG. 2

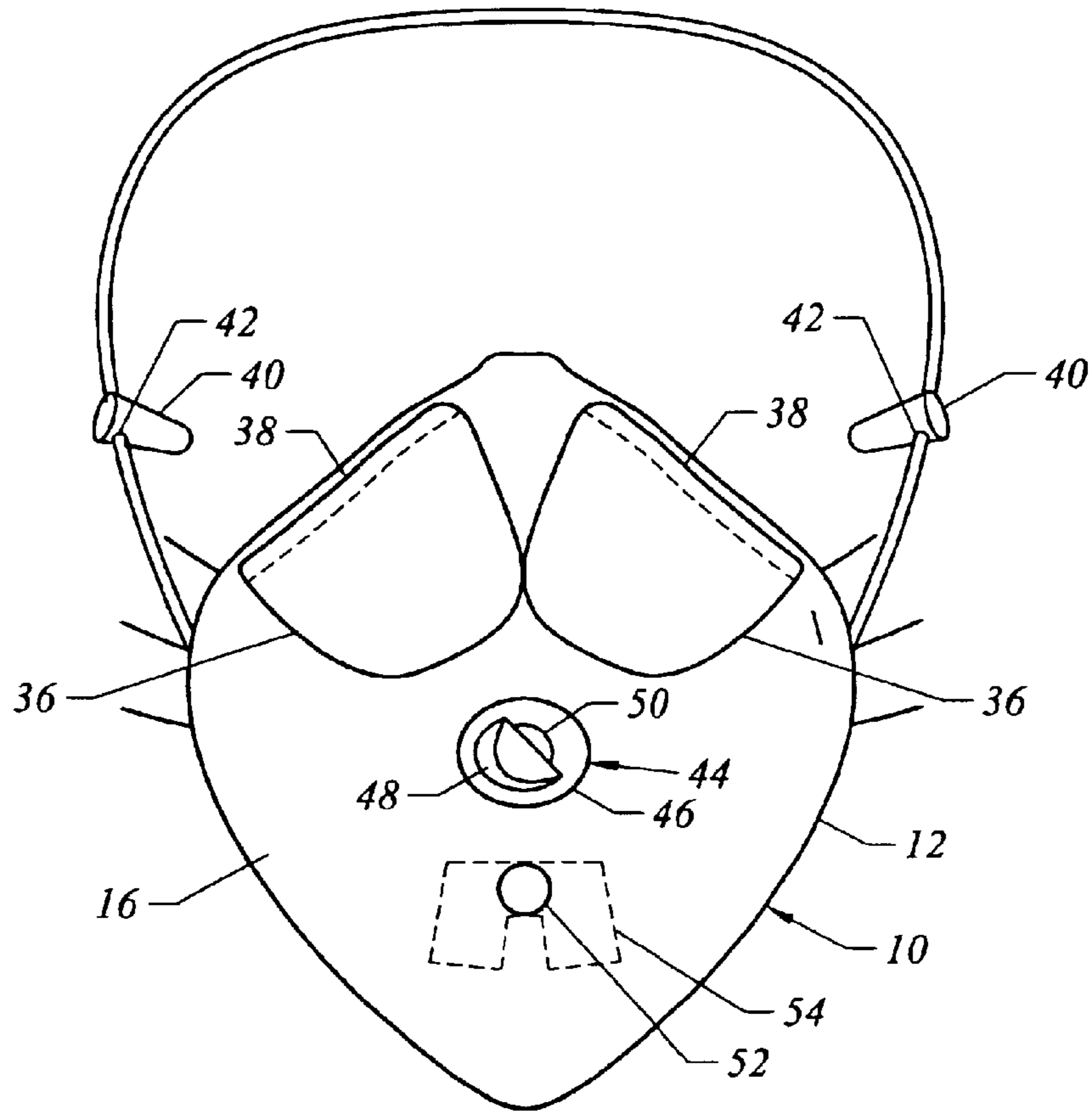


FIG. 3

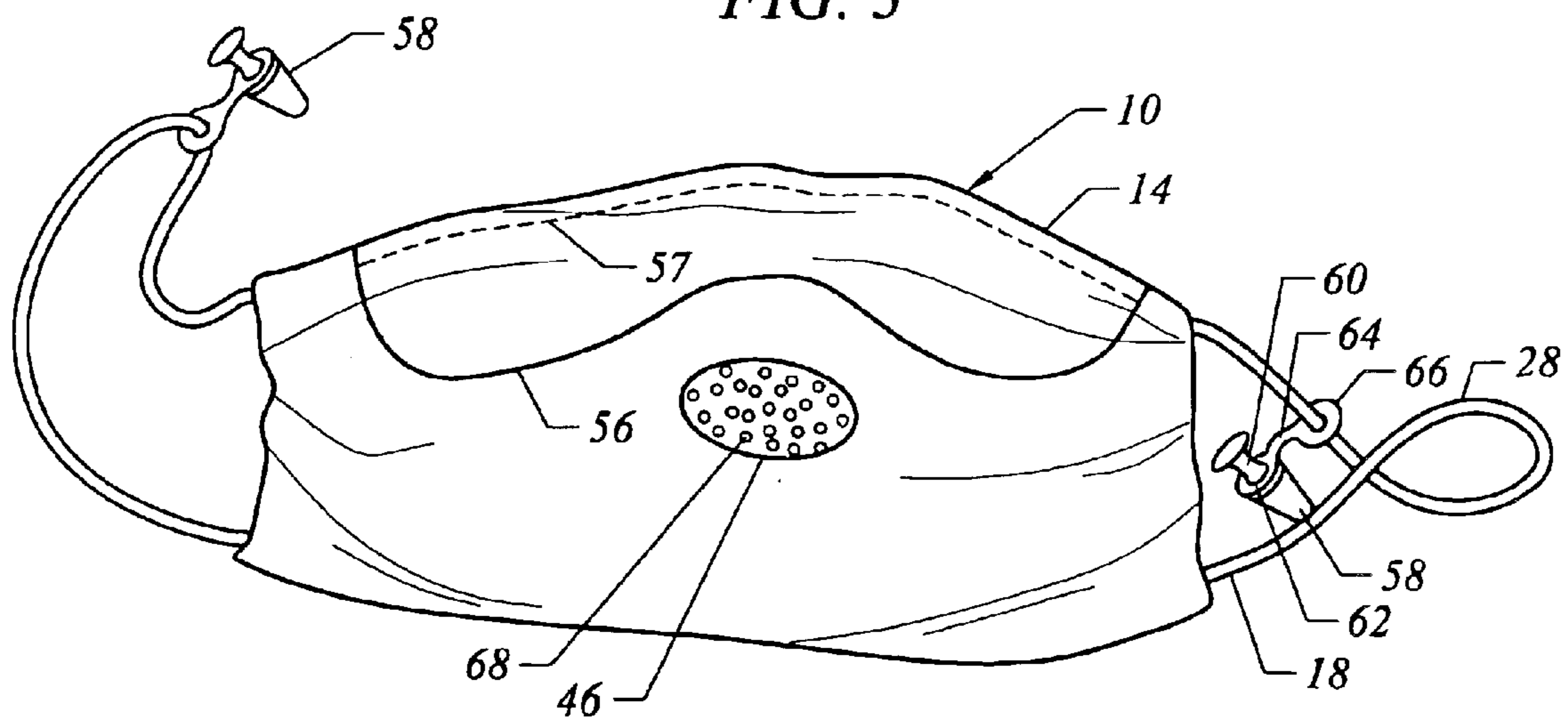


FIG. 4

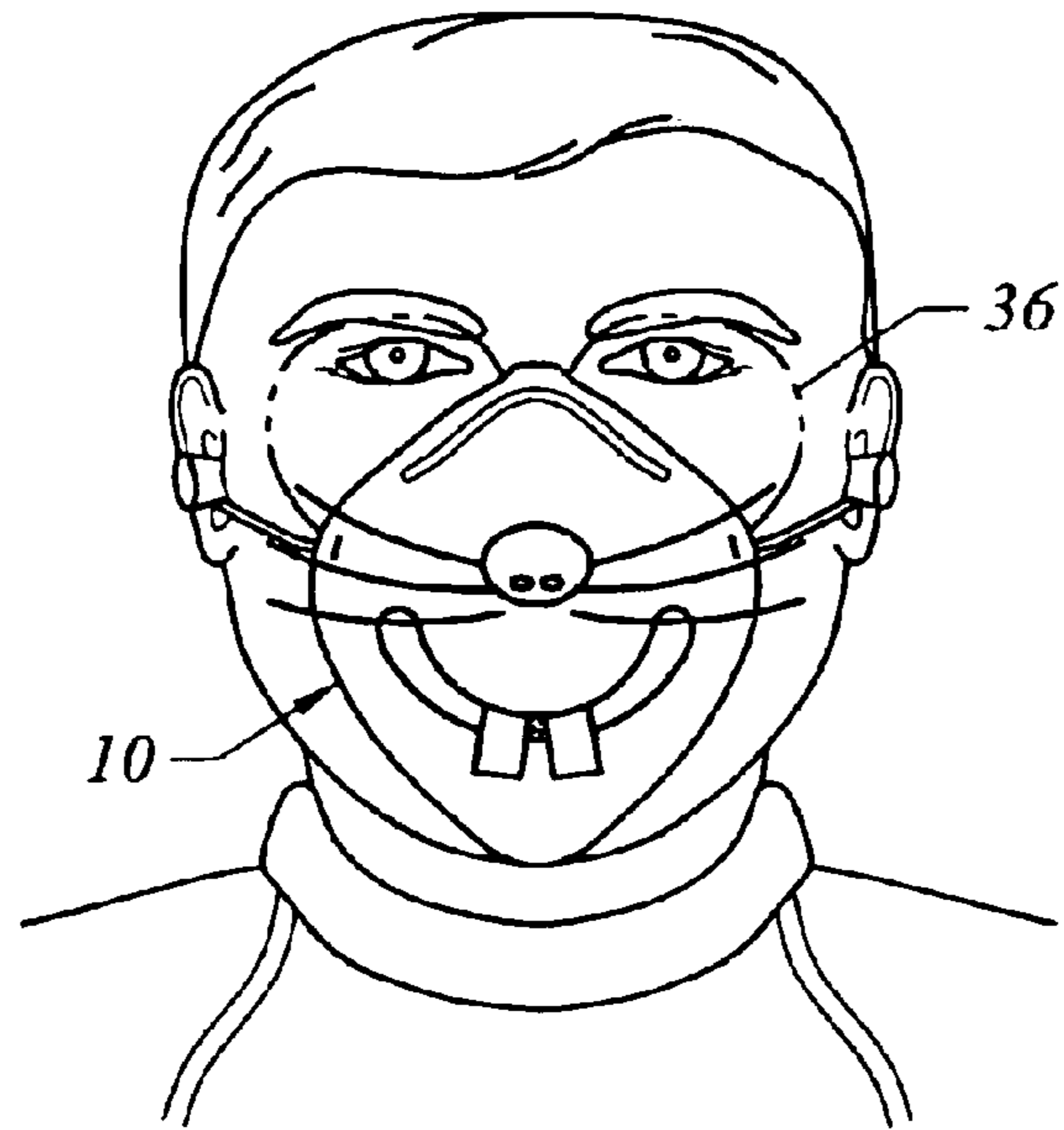


FIG. 5

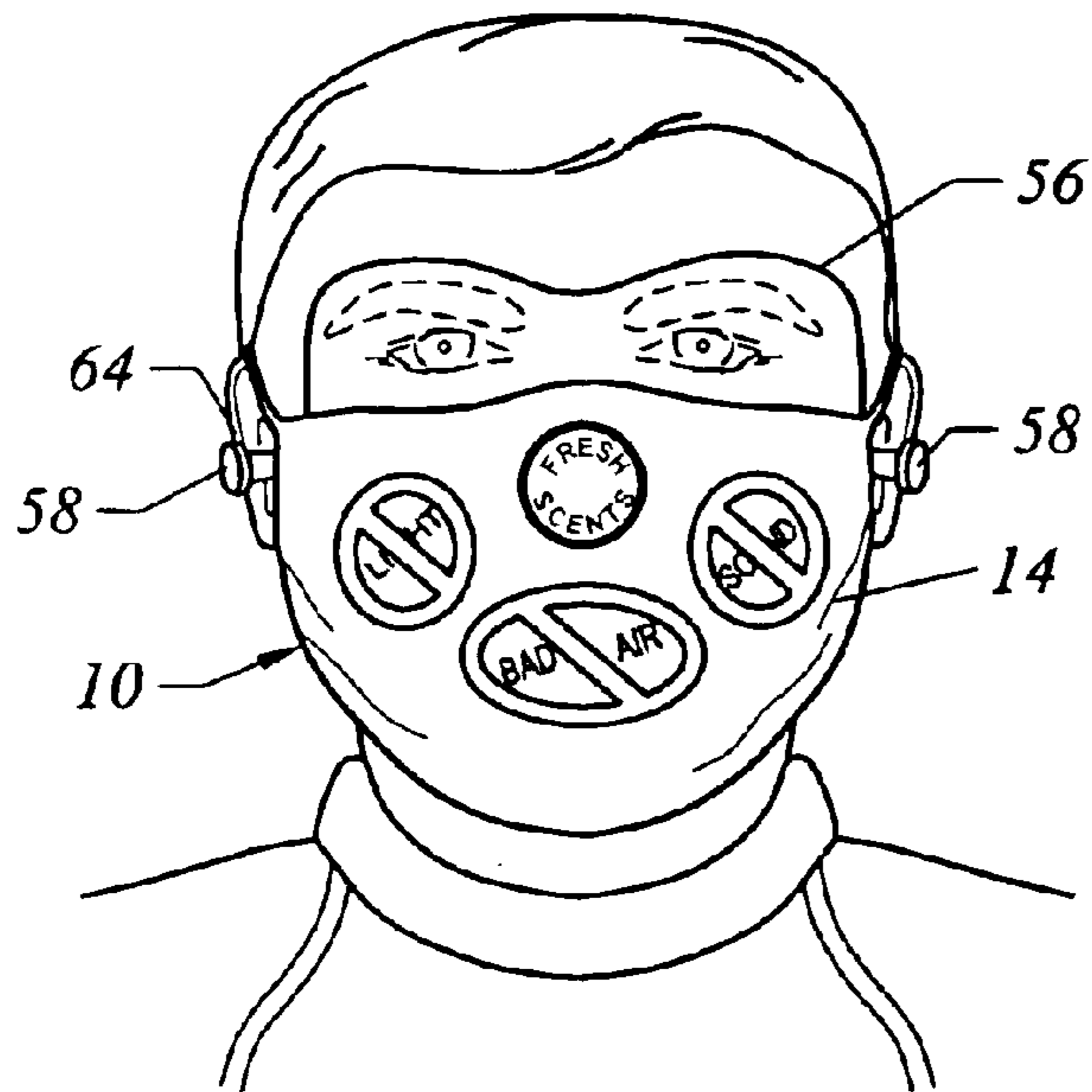


FIG. 6

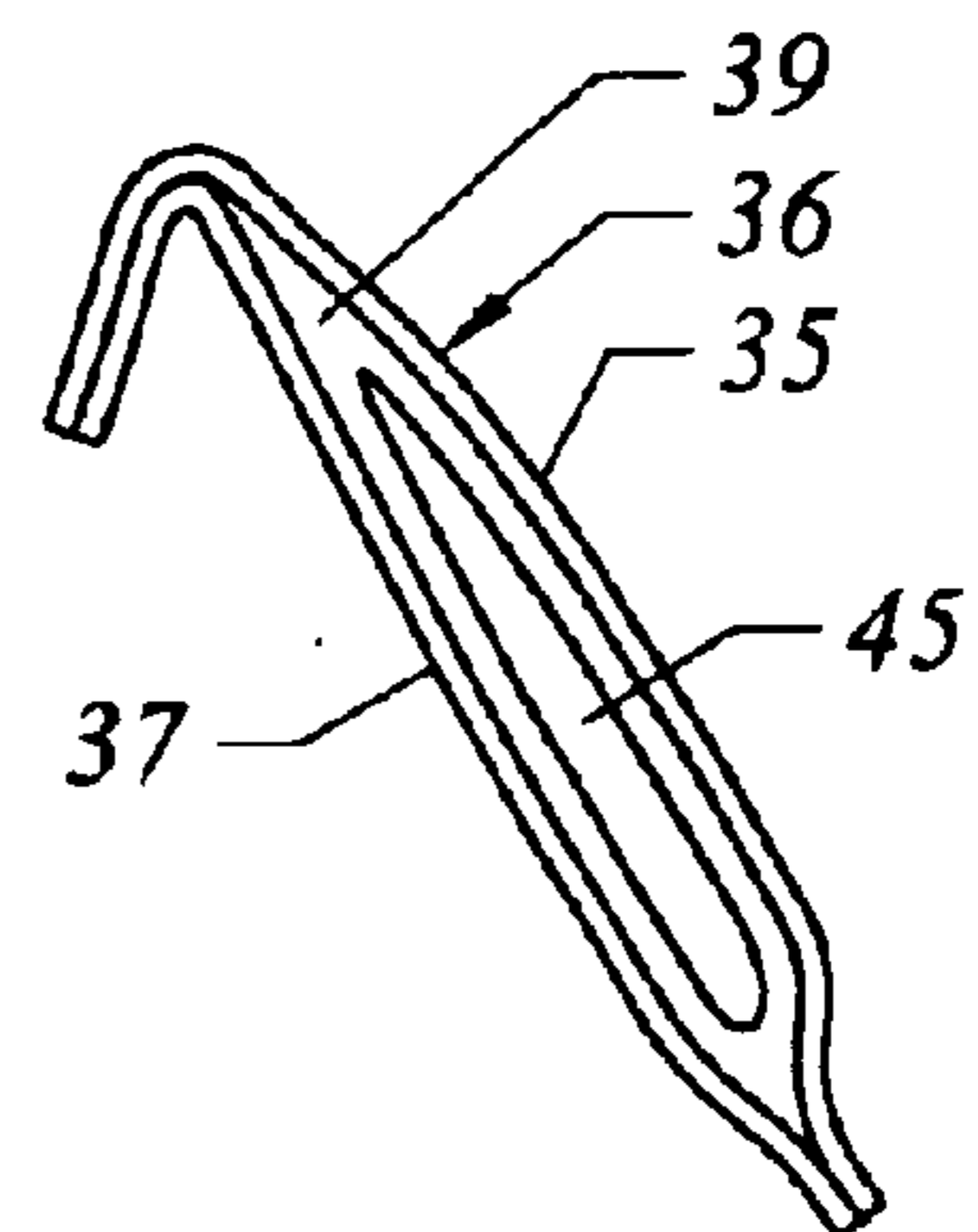


FIG. 7

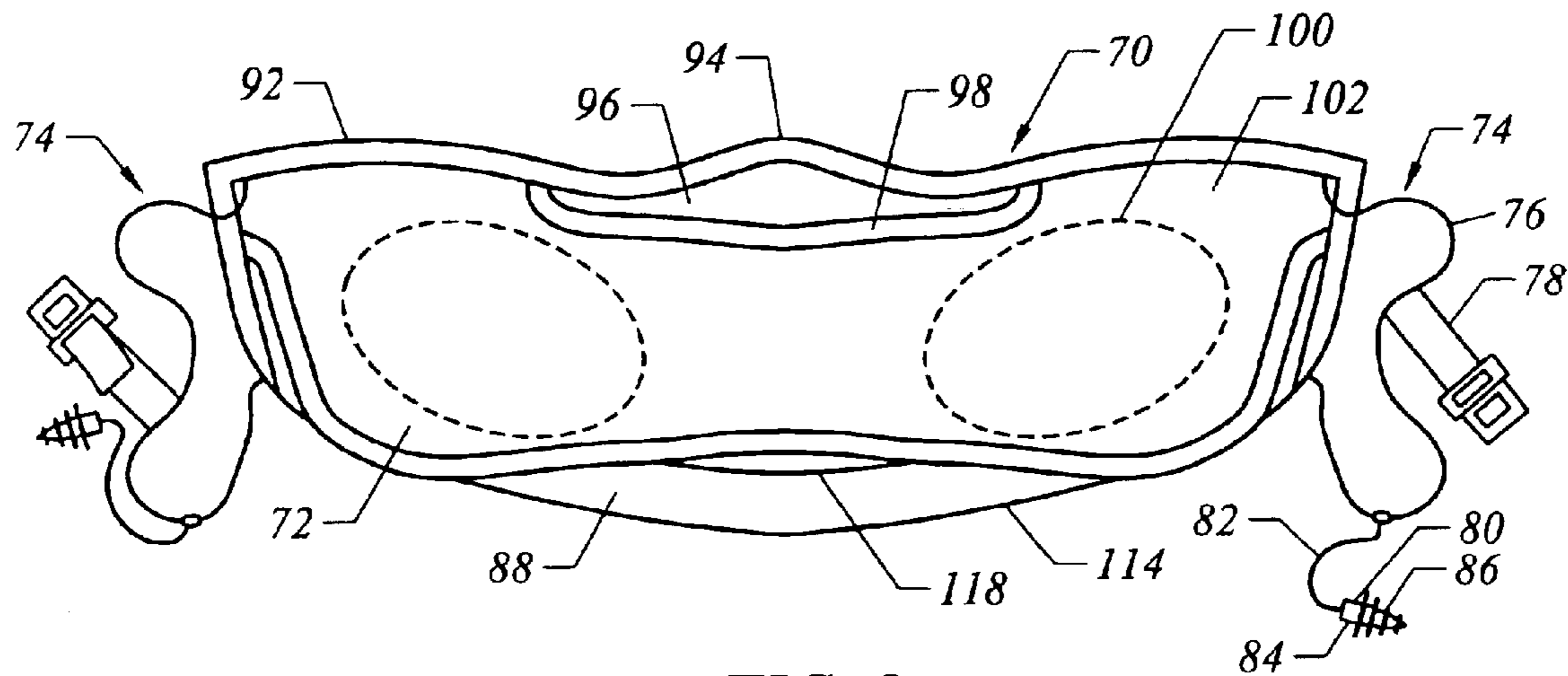


FIG. 8

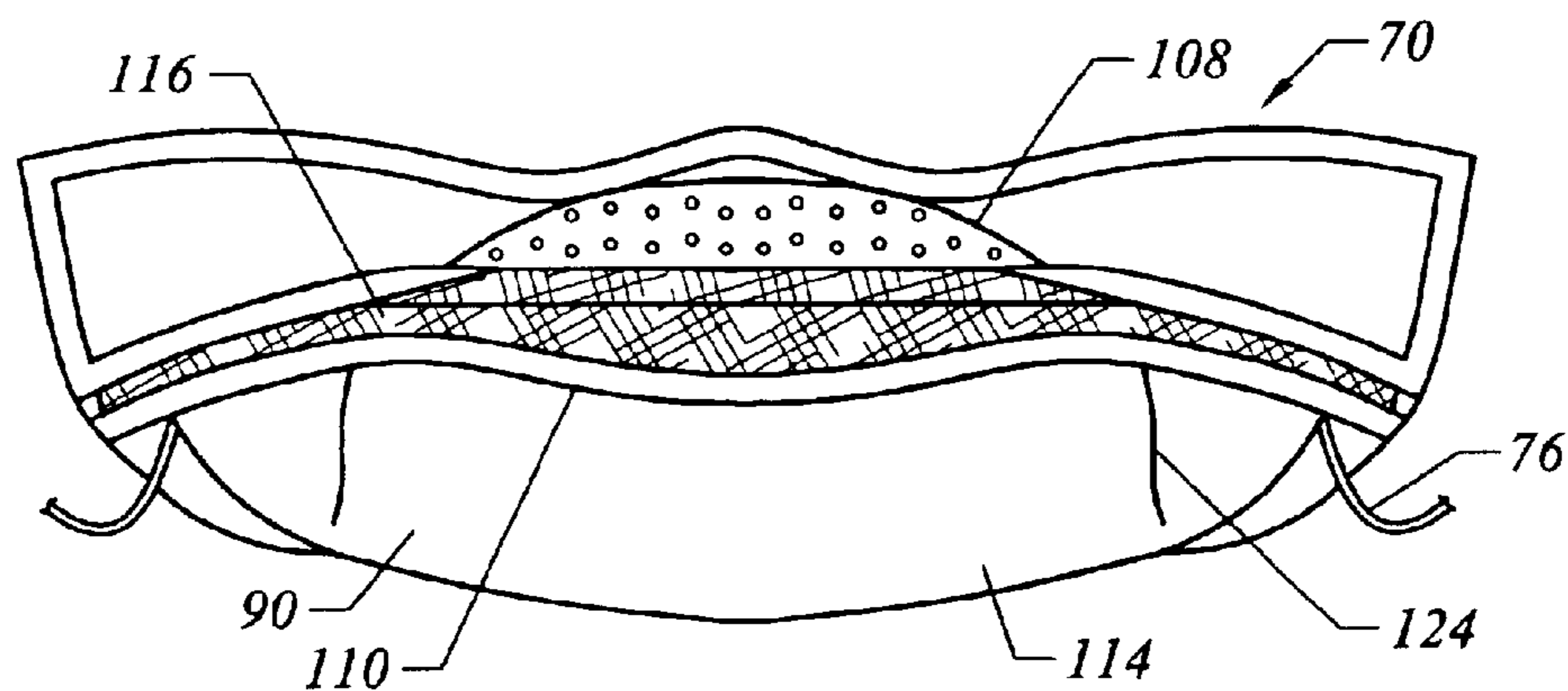


FIG. 9

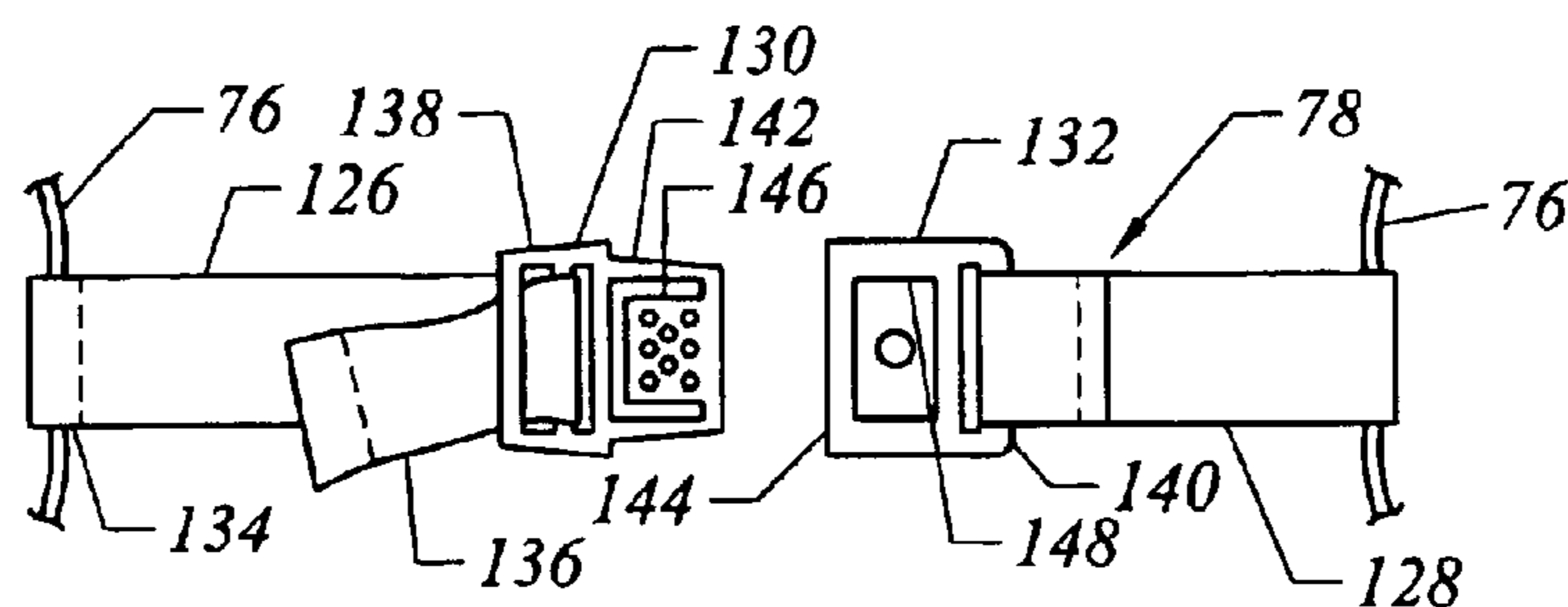


FIG. 10

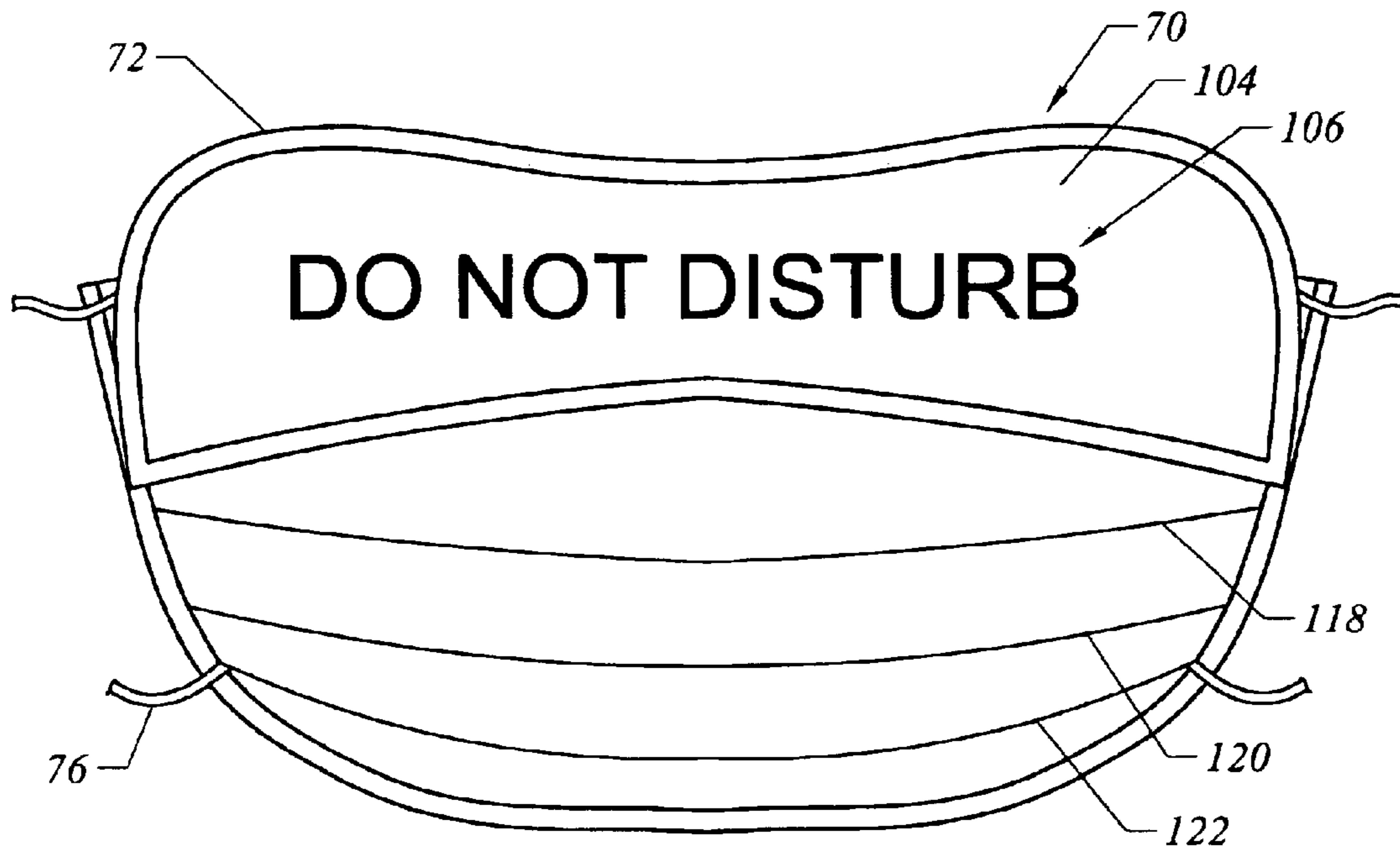


FIG. 11

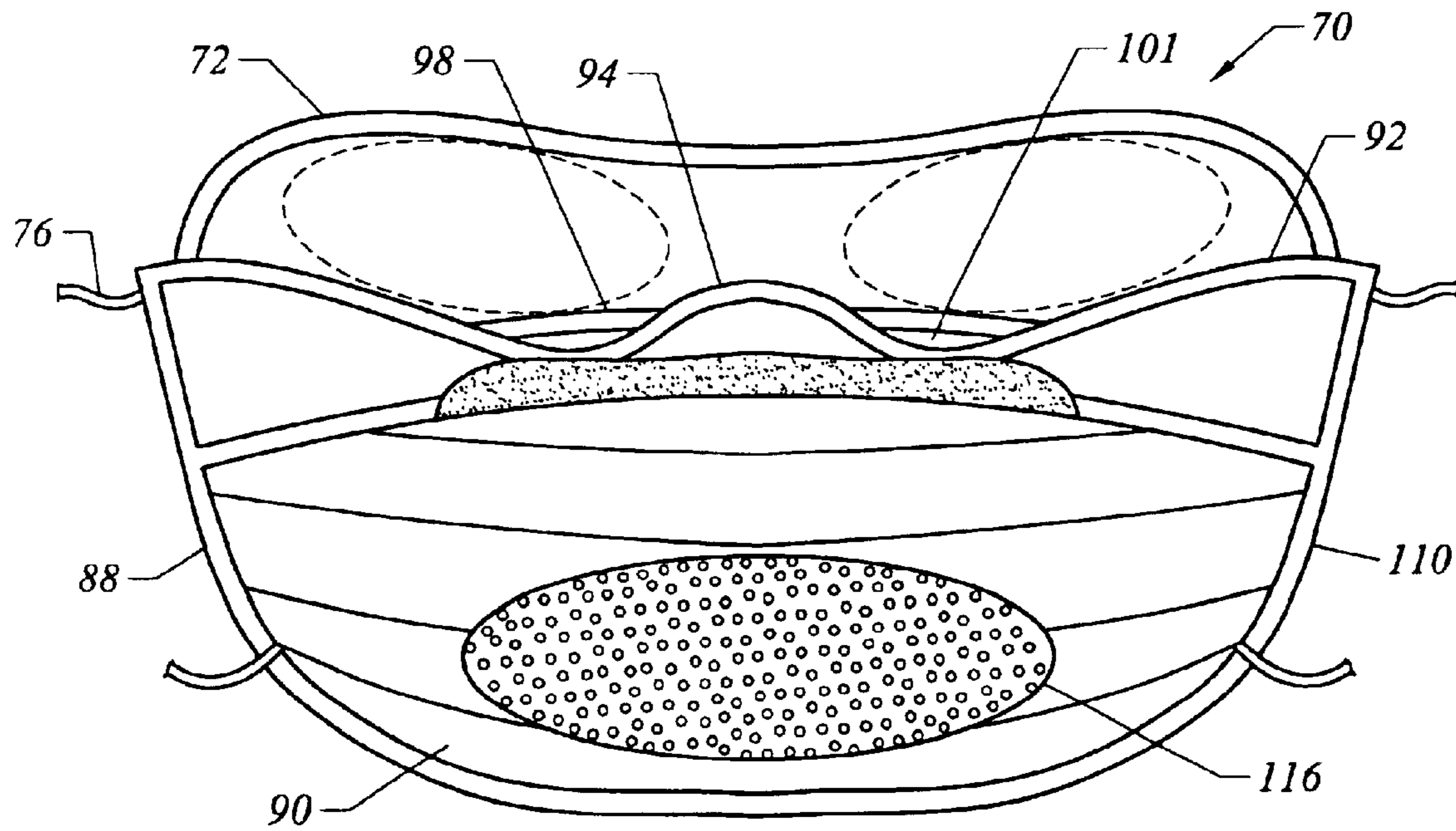


FIG. 12

1

TRAVEL MASK

RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a continuation-in-part of application Ser. No. 10/273,031, filed Oct. 17, 2002, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,758,215, issued Jul. 6, 2004.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a travel mask, and in particular to a reusable or disposable air filtration mask that includes added comfort accessories including earplugs and an eye flap for use during napping, and an aromatic device that emits a pleasant smell during use.

This invention provides a solution for the concern of many modern travelers who travel by airplane, ship, bus or train in a closed environment with recycled air. In addition to the normal closed quarters of the modern travel environment, many carriers are closely regulating the quantity of fresh outside air that is mixed with recirculated air in the passenger compartment.

Use of recirculate air is particularly prevalent in air travel where added external air is typically extracted from engine compressors thereby reducing the efficiency of the engine and increasing the fuel costs and ultimate costs in travel. The cost effectiveness of utilizing recirculated air in ship, train and bus travel is also an important consideration, particularly when the outside air is either cold or hot thereby requiring heating or cooling before the new change of air is circulated.

The use of the invented travel mask ensures that a passenger is reasonably protected from inhaling microbes, pollens and allergens. In addition, for many travelers, the journey is best spent dozing or sleeping. The use of a travel mask having a small aroma packet or patch to infuse the mask with a pleasant aroma transforms the experience of wearing a filtration mask into one that is positive and beneficial. The aroma packet or patch is located inside of the mask near the nose area and can be activated or positioned at the time of using the travel mask to ensure a fresh aroma that has not faded while the masks have been stored. The addition of earplugs incorporated on the headband of the plane engines and travel mask enables wearers to isolate themselves from the noise of the travel compartment and enjoy a serene doze or nap. Additionally, to aid in napping, the travel mask is provided with an eye flap that can be positioned to block light to the eyes and improve the opportunity for sleep or isolation from the cabin environment. When the flap is raised printed on the flap are the words, "DO NOT DISTURB". The mask is preferably provided with markings which may be in the form of amusing characters, advertising or slogans and the like to encourage use of the aromatic travel mask.

It is a primary object of this invention to provide a filtration mask that can reduce or eliminate the inhalation of possible detrimental microbes, pollens and allergens when traveling on a common carrier.

It is also an object of this invention that the filtration mask be equipped with a small aroma packet which may be disposable to provide herbal aroma therapy or simply an appealing and pleasant smell while wearing the mask.

Furthermore, it is an object of this invention to include a head retainer for maintaining the mask in position wherein the head retainer includes slidably or adjustable earplugs for suppressing noise.

In addition, it is an object of this invention to include a contoured and moldable eye flap or eye flaps with a light-

2

blockout fabric that can be placed in position covering the eyes while wearing the filtration mask to suppress light and aid in napping.

It is also an object of this invention that the filtration mask be reusable or disposable.

Also, it is an object of this invention to include markings on the mask that promote use of the mask.

These and other objects of the invention will be disclosed in greater detail in the summary of the invention and in the detailed description of the preferred embodiments of the invention.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to an air filtration mask preferably having an aroma emitting area to provide a pleasant aroma to the wearer of the mask, particularly a traveler on a common carrier. The travel mask of this invention includes a number of features for the comfort and pleasure of the traveler including adjustable sliding earplugs to block noise and eye flaps to block light, allowing a travel passenger to nap or doze while breathing filtered air that is enhanced with an appealing pleasant aroma.

The travel mask has an air-filtration face shield that is constructed and configured to cover the nose and mouth area of a wearer's face allowing the wearer to breathe filtered air. The aromatic mask has a retainer connected to the face shield to securely hold the face shield against the wearer's face during use. The retainer is typically elastic with either an elastic headband around the back of the user's head for formed respirator-type masks, or elastic or string-like ear loops for surgical-type masks. On one preferred embodiment the retainer is in the form of elastic string loops on each side of the mask that are connected by a clasp unit.

The face shield has an aroma emitting area that is preferably located between the nose and mouth area of a wearer when wearing the mask. It is understood that the entire face shield can be impregnated with an aroma generating substance. However, because other passengers may be affected by the aroma, it is preferred that the aroma generating substance be a central patch or packet located on the inside of the face shield which is practical and cost effective. When the travel mask is reused, it is preferred that the aroma patch be in the form of a disposable, but durable tissue that can be replaced with a fresh patch before each use.

In addition to the aroma patch, the travel mask of this invention preferably includes other features for the comfort and pleasure of the wearer. Attached to the retainer are adjustable sliding earplugs that are used by the wearer to block engine noise and other noise from the travel compartment. Also, attached to the face shield is a light blocking flap that is folded against the face shield. The eye flap or flaps may be raised by the wearer to block light allowing the traveler to nap or doze while enjoying the aromatic mask. The eye flap or flaps preferably include thermal gel packs that can be heated or chilled and inserted into a flap pocket for soothing the eye lid and forehead area of the wearer.

Additionally, the flap or the face shield of the mask is preferably imprinted with markings in the form of amusing or informative graphics. The face shield may include a straw hole to allow the wearer to drink while wearing the mask.

Also, the travel mask is preferably provided in different colors that may suggest the aroma, for example, yellow for lemon, green for mint, pink for cherry or raspberry, and the like.

These and other features are described in greater detail with reference to the drawings in the detailed description of the preferred embodiments of this invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a front perspective view of one embodiment of the travel mask of this invention.

FIG. 2 is a front perspective view of another embodiment of the travel mask of this invention.

FIG. 3 is a back perspective view of the travel mask of FIG. 1.

FIG. 4 is a back perspective view of the travel mask of FIG. 2.

FIG. 5 is a front perspective view of the travel mask of FIG. 1 covering the nose and mouth area of a wearer.

FIG. 6 is a front perspective view of the travel mask of FIG. 2 covering the nose and mouth area of a wearer with an eye flap extended to cover the wearer's eyes.

FIG. 7 is a partial cross-sectional view of the eye flap of FIG. 6 showing an internal thermal gel pack.

FIG. 8 is perspective view of an improved embodiment of the travel mask of this invention.

FIG. 9 is a back perspective view of the travel mask of FIG. 8.

FIG. 10 is an enlarged partial view of the retainer for the mask of FIG. 8.

FIG. 11 is a front perspective view of the improved embodiment of the travel mask of FIG. 8 with a raised eye flap and extended face mask.

FIG. 12 is a back perspective view of the extended travel mask of FIG. 11.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The travel mask of this invention is designated generally by the reference numeral 10. Although the form of the travel mask can vary, it is typically a formed particulate respirator mask 12 as shown in FIG. 1, or a cloth-like surgical mask 14 as shown in FIG. 2. Both embodiments of the mask 10 perform the common basic task of air filtration to remove dust, dander and most airborne pollens, allergens and microbes.

Referring to the embodiment of the travel mask 10 of FIG. 1, the respirator-type mask 12 includes a pliable, but form-retaining face shield 16 and a retainer 18 in the form of an elastic strap 20 connected to the face shield 16 by staples 22. To aid in conforming the face shield 16 to the wearer's face, a deformable metal reinforcement strip 24 is located on the outside of the face shield 16 at the bridge of the wearer's nose. When the mask is positioned on a wearer's face, the strip 24 can be bent by finger pressure to conform the mask to the contours of the wearer's face and prevent leakage during use.

In contrast, the travel mask 10 of FIG. 2 has a face shield 26 that is fabricated of a flexible, cloth-like material that conforms to the wearer's face by action of the head retainer 18. In FIG. 2 the head retainer 18 is in the form of elastic loops 28. The loops 28 are installed around a wearer's ears, thereby spreading the mask over the user's face to cover both mouth and nose.

Both masks 12 and 14 include markings 30. In FIG. 1 the markings 30 are in the form of graphics 32 of an amusing animal-like character and in FIG. 2 the markings 30 are in the form of informational symbols 34. It is to be understood that other types of markings may be used including instructional material on how to use the mask, advertisements or branding logos for promoting the travel carrier or a sponsor of the mask.

Referring to FIGS. 3 and 4, the backside of the masks 12 and 14 are shown to illustrate important features incorporated into the mask 10 for the comfort and convenience of the traveler. The formed respirator mask 12 of FIG. 1 includes a pair of eye flaps 36 which are connected to the face shield 16 by folds 38 along the edge of the face shield. The eye flaps 36 are formed of a soft, pliable, light blocking material. The eye flaps 36 can be raised along the folds 38 to cover a wearer's eyes for use during dozing or napping.

As shown in FIG. 7, the construction of the eye flaps 36 is preferably in layers with an outer layer 35 and an inner layer 37 to provide a pocket 39 for inclusion of a thermal gel pack 45. The gel pack 45 may be separately heated or cooled at the desire of the wearer and inserted into the pocket 39 during use or, alternately, the entire mask with the pre-installed gel pack can be thermally treated before use. The gel pack is designed to provide relief from headache or simply to provide an added pleasurable experience when wearing the mask.

Additionally, a pair of soft foam earplugs 40 are provided. The earplugs 40 have a hole 42 through the plugs through which the elastic strap 20 is threaded to enable the earplugs 40 to pivot and slide along the strap for placement in a wearer's ears to block noise. In this manner, the plugs 40 and elastic strap 20 can be adjusted and positioned for the comfort of a particular wearer.

At the center of the face shield 16, at a location between the nose and the mouth of a traveler wearing the mask, is an aroma patch 44. In FIG. 3, the aroma patch 44 is in the form of an aroma packet 46 with a peel-off seal 48, shown partially removed to expose an aroma source 50. The aroma source 50 may be in the form of an absorbent material impregnated with an oil of a pleasing or therapeutic aroma emitting substance. The aroma emitting substance preferably has therapeutic effects such as camphor or eucalyptus, but may simply be pleasing in as the scent of mint or lemon.

Finally, for the formed mask 12 in particular, a hole 52 is provided for the insertion of a straw to enable the wearer to drink while wearing the mask. The hole 52 is protected by a flap 54 (shown in dotted line). The flap 54, as illustrated in the embodiment of FIG. 1, is incorporated into the graphics for the amusement of the wearer, particularly a traveling child. It is to be understood that a plain flap mounted on the front side of the mask may be used. The air flap 54 will normally block air from entering through the hole 52 when a user is wearing the mask and is not using a drinking straw.

Referring now to FIG. 4, the travel mask 10 in the form of the surgical mask 14 has a single, contoured eye flap 56 fabricated from a light blocking material. The eye flap 56 is pliable with a fold 57 to allow the wearer to adjust the eye flap 56 across the eyes to block light. As noted, the eye flap 56 can include thermal gel packs 45 as shown in FIG. 7.

Additionally, the cloth-like surgical mask 14 has a pair of earplugs 58 formed of a rubber-like material with a constricted portion 60 around which a loop 62 of a tether 64 is engaged. A loop 66 at the opposite end of the tether 64 loops around the elastic ear loops 28 that form the head retainer 18. In this manner the earplugs 58 can slide along the elastic loops 28 and be located at the wearer's ears for the comfort of the traveler. In addition, the face shield 26 of the mask 14 includes an aroma patch 46. The aroma patch 46 in FIG. 4 is in the form of a microsphere splotch 68. When the microsphere splotch 68 is scratched, microspheres containing an aromatic substance are broken open releasing a desired aroma. As noted, the aroma can be therapeutic or simply pleasant to the wearer of the mask.

5

Referring now to FIGS. 5 and 6, the manner of wearing the travel mask is illustrated. In FIG. 5, the traveler has the formed respirator mask 12 comfortably positioned over nose and mouth with the elastic strap 20 positioned across the ears with the earplugs 40 partially inserted in the traveler's ears to block sound. The traveler in FIG. 5 is not utilizing the eye flaps 36 which would extend to cover the wearer's eyes as shown in phantom.

Similarly, the traveler in FIG. 6 has the cloth-like surgical mask 14 installed over the wearer's lower face with the eye flap 56 folded upward to block light from the user's eyes, as shown in dotted line. The earplugs 58 on the tethers 64 are shown inserted into the traveler's ears for blocking noise. For the full benefit of the travel masks 10 the wearer in each figure has activated the aroma patch (not visible). In this manner the traveler may enjoy all attributes of the travel mask of this invention.

Referring now to FIGS. 8-12, an improved travel mask 70 is shown, that is similar to the cloth-like surgical mask 14 of FIG. 2. In FIG. 8, the front of the mask has a stream-line and stylish front appearance that can be worn as a partial face mask in the folded condition shown or expanded for full coverage with an eye flap 72 optionally extended as illustrated in FIG. 11. For the convenience of the user, the travel mask 70 includes a mask retainer 74 having an elastic string loop 76 at each side of the mask, with a clasp unit 78 slidable on the string loop 76. Additionally, an ear plug 80 has a string tether 82 slidably attached to the elastic string loop 76 on each side of the mask as shown in FIG. 8. To facilitate insertion of the earplugs 80, the string tether 82 is inserted into the end of a stem 84 of the earplug 80 that the wearer employs to insert the earplug during use. The earplug 80 is fabricated of a pliable plastic having conventional concentric fins 86 that improve the sealing and seating of the earplug when inserted.

The travel mask 70 of FIGS. 8-12 is constructed of a close-weave microfiber material of polymer and cotton composition with at least the respiratory face shield 88 having anti-microbial properties. The face shield 88 is designed to cover the nose and mouth of the wearer, and includes a folded-back chin portion 90 that can optionally be extended under the chin when the mask 70 is fully extended as shown in FIG. 12. It is to be understood that the face shield 88 can be extended as shown in FIG. 12 without the eye flap 72 being raised to block light from the wearers eyes. When folded, the eye flap 72 rests against the front of the face shield and does not interfere with the filtration functions of the face shield during use.

The contoured configuration of the travel mask 70 provides a number of convenient and operational features that greatly improve the functionality and comfort of the mask when worn during a prolonged duration such as an international flight. The outline includes a perimeter trim 92 with a contoured and raised nose bridge 94 that cooperates with a central pocket 96 having an opening trim 98 allowing insertion of gel packs 100 (shown in phantom). The gel packs are positioned between the two material layers 102 and 104 that form the eye flap 72. As shown in FIG. 11, the folded underside of the eye flap 74 can include markings 106, here in the form of a "DO NOT DISTURB" message, that are displayed when the eye flap 74 is raised as shown in FIG. 11. When the eye flap is raised, the pocket trim 98 tucks behind the perimeter trim 92 at the nose bridge 94 to close the central pocket 96 and effectively trap the thermal gel packs 100 at the appropriate location in the pocket 96 over each eye and forehead of the wearer. The pocket 96 has a dark fleece liner 101, a portion of which is visible in FIG. 12, to block light when the flap 72 is raised during use.

6

An improved sealing of the face shield 88 is provided by a soft nose baffle 108 at the inside top of the face shield 88. The baffle is formed of a padded fleece material for added sealing and comfort. The face shield 88 has a perimeter trim 110 with an outer layer 114 of microfiber material and an inner layer 116 fabricated of a netting material isolating the air-filtering microfiber layer 114 from direct facial contact. In addition, the netting material assists in positioning of a disposable oval tissue 116 that is impregnated with an anti-microbial substance and/or an aromatic substance. The durable tissue clings to the netting material and generally remains in position during use. The oval tissue 116 is air permeable and is located at the mouth area of a wearer and may be replaced by a fresh tissue from a sealed pack before each use of the mask 70. The face shield 88 has a series of pleats 118, 120 and 122 which allow the face shield to be expanded in accordion fashion as shown in FIGS. 11 and 12. Additionally, the face shield includes a pair of darts 124 allowing the chin portion of the face shield to be optionally expanded or folded back into the compact configuration as shown in FIGS. 8 and 9.

Referring to FIG. 10, the clasp unit 78 includes pair of ribbon bands 126 and 128, each having a clasp member 130 and 132. The ribbon band 126 has an end loop 134 around one of the elastic string loops 76 to enable the easily grasped ribbon band 126 to slide to the appropriate position during use. The ribbon band 126 has an adjustable end 136 that loops through a slip connector 138 on the clasp number 130.

The other ribbon band 128 loops around the elastic string loop 76 on the opposite side of the mask and around an end connector 140 on the clasp number 132.

The clasp member 130 has a tongue portion 142 that is insertable in an open-end portion 144 of clasp member 132. The tongue portion 142 has a spring clip 146 that engages an opening frame 148 in the open end portion of the clasp member 132. To release the clasp unit, the tongue portion 142 is depressed in the opening frame while the two clasp members 130 and 132 are pulled apart. The clasp unit is fabricated of plastic and has a low profile. While other mask retainers may be employed, the clasp unit described is preferred for comfort and convenience, particularly where the wearer desires to minimize disturbance to his or her hair when worn or removed.

While, in the foregoing, embodiments of the present invention have been set forth in considerable detail for the purposes of making a complete disclosure of the invention, it may be apparent to those of skill in the art that numerous changes may be made in such detail without departing from the spirit and principles of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A travel mask that fits over a nose and mouth area of a wearer's face comprising:

an air-filtration face shield constructed and configured to cover the nose and mouth area of a wearer's face allowing the wearer to breathe filtered air through the face shield, and

a retainer connected to the face shield and arrangeable on a wearer's head with the face shield retained against the wearer's face,

wherein at least part of the face shield has an area emitting a pleasant aroma that the wearer breathes when the mask is worn and the face shield is retained against the wearer's face, and wherein the face shield has at least one light blocking flap connected to the face shield that is foldable against the face shield when not in use by a wearer of the mask.

7

2. The travel mask of claim 1 wherein the part of the face shield having the pleasant aroma emitting area is located between the nose and mouth area of a wearer when wearing the mask.

3. The travel mask of claim 2 wherein the part of the face shield having the pleasant aroma emitting area comprises an aroma patch.

4. The travel mask of claim 3 wherein the aroma patch is activatable by the wearer to emit a pleasant aroma.

5. The travel mask of claim 3 wherein the aroma patch comprises an aroma packet having a peel-off seal.

6. The travel mask of claim 3 wherein the aroma patch comprises a splotch of microspheres containing an aromatic substance.

7. The travel mask of claim 1 wherein the retainer has noise blocking earplugs positionable at a wearer's ears for insertion into the ears of the wearer to block noise.

8. The travel mask of claim 7 wherein the noise blocking earplugs are slidably connected to the retainer.

9. The travel mask of claim 7 wherein the retainer includes an elastic head band and the earplugs are connected to the elastic head band.

10. The travel mask of claim 7 wherein the earplugs have a tether and the tether connects the earplugs to the retainer.

11. The travel mask of claim 10 wherein the retainer includes ear loops and the ear loops are installed around a wearer's ears when the mask is worn.

12. The travel mask of claim 1 wherein the face shield has a straw hole, and a flap covering the straw hole wherein the straw hole is located proximate to a wearer's mouth when the mask is worn.

13. The travel mask of claim 1 wherein the face shield includes graphics.

14. The travel mask of claim 1 wherein the face shield is a formed particulate respirator with two foldable light blocking flaps.

15. The travel mask of claim 14 wherein the foldable light blocking flaps contain a thermal gel pack.

16. The travel mask of claim 1 wherein the face shield is fabricated of a cloth-like material with a single, foldable, light blocking flap.

17. The travel mask of claim 16 wherein the foldable light blocking flap contains a thermal gel pack.

18. A travel mask that fits over a nose and mouth area of a wearer's face comprising:

an air-filtration face shield constructed and configured to cover the nose and mouth area of a wearer's face allowing the wearer to breathe filtered air through the face shield,

8

a mask retainer connected to the face shield and arrangeable on a wearer's head with the face shield retained against the wearer's face, and

a foldable light-blocking eye flap attached to the air-filtration face shield, wherein the light blocking flap can be folded against the face shield or extended to a position blocking a wearer's eyes when the travel mask is worn.

19. The travel mask of claim 18, wherein at least part of the face shield has an area emitting a pleasant aroma that the wearer breathes when the mask is worn and the face shield is retained against the wearer's face.

20. The travel mask of claim 18 wherein the eye flap is foldable against the front of the face shield when not in use.

21. The travel mask of claim 20 wherein the eye flap has a light blocking liner.

22. The travel mask of claim 20 wherein the eye flap has a central pocket and wherein thermal gel packets are insertable in the central pocket and locatable at a position over the eyes and forehead of a wearer when the mask is worn.

23. The travel mask of claim 22 wherein the face shield has perimeter with a contoured and raised nose bridge trim and wherein the central pocket has a pocket opening trim engageable by the nose bridge trim to close the central pocket when the eye flap is raised during use.

24. The travel mask of claim 20, further comprising a nose baffle at the inside top of the face shield for added sealing and comfort.

25. The travel mask of claim 20, further comprising a disposable tissue positionable at the nose and mouth area at the inside of the face shield.

26. The travel mask of claim 25 wherein the tissue is impregnated with a substance having beneficial properties.

27. The travel mask of claim 20 wherein the face shield is constructed of an outer layer of a close-weave microfiber material with an inner layer of an antimicrobial material.

28. The travel mask of claim 20 wherein the face shield is pleated with a tucked back chin portion that is optionally expandable to cover the chin when the mask is worn.

29. The travel mask of claim 20 wherein the mask retainer has a clasp unit.

30. The travel mask of claim 20 further comprising ear plugs having a tether slidably connected to the mask retainer.

31. The travel mask of claim 20 wherein the eye flap has markings on the underside of the folded flap which are exposed when the eye flap is raised during use.

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